

### REMARKS

Claims 1 through 26 are in the application and are presented for consideration. By this amendment, Applicant has presented each of claims 14 and 16 in independent form. Applicant has paid the additional fee for these additional independent claims.

Claims 14 and 16 have been indicated to be allowable such that the claims as now presented are believed to be in allowable form. Applicant has also amended each of the original independent claims to include additional features such that the claims include the same subject matter as the granted claims from European proceeding.

The claims as originally presented for examination were objected to based on informalities. Applicant has now made appropriate corrections as suggested. Applicant wishes to thank the Examiner for the careful reading of the claims of the helpful comments.

Claims 6, 17, 20, 23 and 25 have been rejected as being indefinite. These claims have been amended to address the issues which have been raised. It is believed that the claims as now presented are clear, definite and fully conform with the requirements of the statute.

Claims 1-13, 17-21, 23, 25 and 26 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by USP 4773156, drawn to Kurita.

The invention provides an automatic screwdriver apparatus with a combination of features including a basic carrier with a common principle plane (X-Y plane) and a plurality

of driver tools in which the position may be adjustable in the X-Y plane. In addition, the tools have driving heads 22 which may be moved in the Z direction. An important and novel aspect of the invention is that the automatic screwdriver apparatus comprises at least one group of screwing tools and additional other screwing tools or groups of such tools. The screwing tools of the one group are movable together in the principal plane (X-Y) of the base carrier by means of adjustment devices (an adjustment means with one or more adjustment devices) and are movable in multiple directions, so they have a common plane of movement.

The combination of features presents the advantage that the number of driving tools can be changed and especially increased as needed. Furthermore, the possibilities of motion and adjustment of the driving tools is improved. With the integration of some of the driving tools into driving groups adjustments can be made to a driving group as a whole. Some of the driving tools are grouped such that they move as a group while some of the driving tools are independent. The driving tools movable as a group move in a common plane relative to the remaining or additional tools. This allows for a simple movement of the group to change from one car type to another, wherein the position of a group of fastener sites is different but the relative position of the fastener sites is the same within the group. Further, due to this grouping, the carriage units and the transverse adjustments require less space, which offers the possibility of accommodating an increasing number of driving tools in any desired position and with wide ranges of motion on a basic carrier.

Kurita discloses an apparatus for securing parts which does not include the combination of features as is claimed. In particular, Kurita fails to teach and fails to suggest a screwdriver

apparatus with at least one group of screwing tools and also additional other screwing tools or groups of such tools in which the screwing tools of the group are movable together on a plane and relative to the additional or further tools.

Kurita discloses an apparatus for securing parts including two different embodiments. In the embodiments of Figure 4 to 10 there are three screwdrivers (1), which are connected to a common support member (12), which is movable by a robot in the direction of two axes (x,y). The three screwdrivers (1) are movable independently from each other in the vertical z-direction. In this embodiment there is no teaching and no suggestion of providing a group of screwing tools and in addition other tools or another group of tools. Furthermore a principal plane of the base carrier is not provided. If the first support member (12) is regarded as a principal plane of the base carrier the three screwdrivers (1) are only adjustable in the one z-direction but not in multiple directions. Therefore the screwdrivers (1) can accommodate themselves to the workpiece (5) only in one direction. In the other x- and y-directions the screwdrivers (1) have always the same position and relation to one another.

In the other embodiment of Figure 11 to 14 according to Kurita, the screwdrivers (1) have two additional adjustment devices or cylinders (34, 37) for an additional movement in the y- and z-direction. These are mounted on the first support member (12) and are adjustable in first instance in the z-direction by the cylinder (13). This construction is similar to the first embodiment. In the embodiments of Figure 11 to 14 there is a fixed relationship of the screwdrivers (1) in respect of the x-axis. According to the teachings of this second embodiment there is no suggestion of providing a group of screwdrivers and an adjustment of

this group relative to other screwing tools. In fact all the screwing tools disclosed by Kurita are movable independently from one another in the z-direction and furthermore in part in the y-direction.

The prior art as a whole, including Kurita, fails to teach and fails to suggest the novel combination of features according to the invention. The invention provides advantages which are not realized by the prior art arrangements. The invention provides a combination of features which is not obvious in view the prior art. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the claims be favorably considered as now presented.

Claims 22 and 24 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over '156 in view of USP 4799581, to Fujii, hereinafter '581.

US 4,799,581 A (Fujii) does not teach and does not suggest features similar to the claimed automatic driver device. Instead, Fujii is concerned with a loading device for spare wheels on a vehicle. According to Fujii the loading device comprises a robot with a robot control. According to the present invention as claimed, a screwdriver apparatus is movable on a base carrier. This is not itself a robot. However the invention may be used with robots in the periphery for other purposes and the control of these robots is used to control the apparatus, too.

The prior art as a whole does not suggest the combination of features claimed. The invention provides features which are not disclosed by the prior art and the prior art does not present meaningful teachings which could lead to the combination of features, as claimed, in an obvious manner. The rejection does not establish a prima facie case of obviousness. It is

Applicant's position that the claims as now presented patentably define over the prior as a whole. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the rejections be reconsidered.

Further and favorable action on the merits is requested.

Respectfully submitted  
for Applicant,



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SHOULD ANY OTHER FEE BE REQUIRED, THE PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE IS HEREBY REQUESTED TO CHARGE SUCH FEE TO OUR DEPOSIT ACCOUNT 13-0410.

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